

February 1990

MILITARY PERSONNEL

Designation of Joint Duty Assignments



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United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-232940

February 15, 1990

The Honorable Sam Nunn
Chairman, Committee on
Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Nicholas Mavroules
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Investigations
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

As you requested, we have reviewed the Department of Defense (DOD) joint duty assignment list to determine whether its positions provide the experience required by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act. We obtained written comments from DOD and have incorporated their comments where appropriate.

Unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of this letter. At that time, we will send copies to the Secretary of Defense; Director, Office of Management and Budget; and other interested parties. We will also make copies available to others upon request.

This report was prepared under the direction of Donna M. Heivilin, Director, Logistics Issues, (202) 275-8412. Other major contributors are listed in appendix VII.

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Executive Summary

Purpose

The Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986 to address long-standing problems affecting the ability of the military services to carry out successful joint military operations. Title IV of the act addressed joint officer personnel policies and, among other things, required officers to serve in at least one designated joint duty position before being considered for promotion to general/flag officer.

The Chairmen, Subcommittee on Investigations, House Committee on Armed Services, and the Senate Committee on Armed Services asked GAO to review the designated joint duty positions to determine if they provided the type of experience the act required.

Background

Title IV required the Secretary of Defense to define a joint duty assignment and publish a list of such assignments. According to the act, joint duty positions had to provide officers significant experience in "joint matters" and could not be in an officer's own military department or for joint training or education. Joint matters is defined in the act as matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, including matters relating to national military strategy, strategic and contingency planning, and command and control of combat operations under unified command.

The act did not contain any additional guidance on a joint duty assignment. Because the language in the joint matters definition (i.e., the integrated employment of forces) suggested joint military operations, GAO reviewed assignments over a range of operational to nonoperational positions.

In April 1987, the Secretary of Defense published a joint duty assignment list that contained over 8,000 positions. The list included all positions at or above the rank of major (Navy lieutenant commander) in operational agencies that employ or plan the employment of forces (e.g., the Joint Staff and unified commands). Agencies that support the employment of forces, such as the Defense Logistics Agency, were allowed to place all general/flag officer positions and up to 50 percent of field grade positions on the list. The list is updated periodically, and the May 1988 list contained 8,363 positions.

Results in Brief

GAO found that title IV does not specify what positions should be included on the joint duty assignment list. Under title IV, DOD has the

responsibility and discretion to determine the types of positions that should be included as long as they are not in a military department or for joint training or education. DOD believes that both operational and nonoperational joint positions provide the joint perspective the act intended. GAO sampled the positions DOD designated as joint positions and found that 60 percent of the positions sampled in operational agencies and 42 percent of the positions sampled in support agencies provided joint operational experience. Only a very small percentage of the positions in both types of organizations provided single-service rather than joint experience.

GAO's Analysis

Based on discussions with DOD personnel and interviews with designated joint duty position incumbents, GAO defined six categories of experience as they related to the employment of military forces. They ranged from participating in or planning current joint operations to involvement in technical and administrative matters involving only one service. The first two categories provide what GAO believes is joint operational experience. The second two categories provide what GAO believes is joint nonoperational or technical and administrative experience. The remaining two categories provide what GAO believes is single-service experience, although the incumbent is assigned to a joint staffed organization.

GAO interviewed a random sample of 241 incumbents of designated positions from selected operational agencies and 133 incumbents of designated positions in selected support agencies. In addition, GAO interviewed a random sample of 130 incumbents of nondesignated positions in selected support agencies. Based on the results of these interviews and a review of position descriptions, GAO placed each position in one of the six categories.

GAO found that 60 percent of positions in sampled operational agencies (where all positions were included on the list) provided experience in joint operational matters. Forty-two percent of the positions in the sampled defense agencies (where only 50 percent of positions were included on the list) provided experience in joint operational matters. In addition, 28 percent of the nondesignated positions in sampled defense agencies provide experience GAO believes is operational.

Although few in number, GAO identified some designated joint positions that did not provide joint experience. For example, a Navy officer employed in the Joint Staff as a defense forces cost analyst helped develop a database that was used to assess the impact of changes in

budget levels on force structure and readiness. The officer was the analyst for only the Navy portion of the database.

DOD believes that both operational and nonoperational joint duty positions effectively meet the requirements of title IV and has several concerns about a list consisting of only operational joint positions. For example, a joint duty assignment list that contains only operational positions would probably be smaller than the current list. Although DOD has not determined the number of positions necessary to provide candidates for general/flag rank with a prior joint tour, DOD officials believe that a list based solely on operational positions will not allow a sufficient number of officers to meet this prerequisite. GAO did not analyze the number of positions needed to satisfy any of the title IV requirements, including the joint duty prerequisite.

Recommendations

This report contains no recommendations.

Agency Comments

DOD concurred with our report (see app. VI). DOD restated several of its concerns about a smaller, more operationally focused list. For example, it stated that a smaller operationally focused list might imply that joint experience is unimportant and would reduce the opportunity for combat arms officers to fill joint duty positions since many presently fill joint nonoperational positions. DOD is also uncertain about how well it could satisfy the joint duty prerequisite for promotion to general/flag officer with a shorter list.

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Abbreviations

DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
JDAL	Joint Duty Assignment List
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense

Introduction

Title IV of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986 required the Secretary of Defense to designate joint duty positions and publish a joint duty assignment list (JDAL). The act required that designated positions provide significant experience in joint matters (i.e., matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces).

This study responds to a request from the Chairmen, Subcommittee on Investigations, House Committee on Armed Services, and the Senate Committee on Armed Services to oversee implementation of the Reorganization Act. The purpose of this review was to determine whether an assignment to a JDAL position provides officers with experience in joint matters as required by the act. The Senate Committee on Armed Services was also interested in how DOD designated critical positions and whether some positions in the military departments and not on the list provide experience intended under the act.

Background

The Congress enacted the Reorganization Act to address numerous problems affecting performance of DOD. Reports leading to enactment of the act focused on organizational and personnel problems affecting joint U.S. military operations. For example, the failed 1980 attempted rescue of U.S. hostages in Iran and interservice communications problems experienced during the 1983 Grenada operation were partly attributed to the inability of the services to coordinate and conduct multiservice operations. Also, witnesses testified before the House Committee on Armed Services in 1982 that few high quality officers were assigned to joint duty¹ and that assignments in a joint organization could have a detrimental impact on an officer's career.

Title IV of the act, "Joint Officer Personnel Policy," sought to increase the joint perspective among officers, improve the quality of officers assigned to joint duty assignments, and increase these officers' educational preparation and experience levels. To achieve these objectives, title IV required a joint duty assignment prior to promotion to general/flag officer (with exceptions for officers in certain scientific, technical, and professional fields). It established a category of officers known as joint specialty officers, and defined their qualifying education and experience requirements. Title IV established promotion targets for joint

¹Before the Reorganization Act, a joint duty assignment was any position in such organizations as the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Organization of Joint Chiefs of Staff, unified commands, DOD agencies, other federal agencies, or exchange tours with an allied service or other U.S. military service.

specialists and other officers assigned to joint duty, and established minimum tour lengths for joint duty assignments.

Title IV Required DOD to Designate Joint Duty Assignments

Title IV required the Secretary of Defense to define a joint duty assignment and publish a list of assignments that would provide officers with significant experience in joint matters. The act defined joint matters as matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, including matters relating to national military strategy, strategic and contingency planning, and command and control of combat operations under unified command. According to the act, positions within an officer's own military department or for joint training or education could not be on the list.

Title IV also required that at least 1,000 of the joint duty positions be designated "critical." The act defined a critical position as one in which it is "highly important" that the incumbent be trained in and oriented towards joint matters, and therefore required that all critical positions be filled by a joint specialist.² A joint specialist is an officer nominated by his or her service and approved by the Secretary of Defense as having met specific joint education and experience requirements.

The Secretary of Defense published the first joint duty assignment list in April 1987 containing about 8,000 positions, including over 1,000 critical positions. The list contained all general/flag officer positions in the affected agencies. The list also included all field grade³ officer positions in some organizations and only about 50 percent of such positions in other agencies. DOD included all field grade and above positions in agencies it believed were involved in force employment or planning force employment ("operational agencies"). These consist primarily of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Joint Staff,⁴ and the unified commands. Agencies that primarily support force employment ("support agencies") designated up to 50 percent of their field grade positions to be on the list. This group includes the Defense Logistics Agency and

²Title IV requires that until January 1, 1994, at least 80 percent of the positions must be filled by joint specialists. After that date, all positions must be filled by a joint specialist unless waived by the Secretary of Defense.

³Field grade refers to the grades of major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel (Navy lieutenant commander, commander, and captain).

⁴The Joint Staff refers to the organization of military and civilian personnel who work for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

the Defense Intelligence Agency. DOD periodically updates the list, which, in May 1988 contained 8,363 positions.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Chairmen, Subcommittee on Investigations, House Committee on Armed Services, and the Senate Committee on Armed Services, requested us to determine

- whether JDAL positions provide the experience in the integrated employment of forces envisioned by the act,
- how DOD designated critical positions, and
- whether some nondesignated positions in the military departments provide experience in the integrated employment of forces.

To determine the types of experience provided by positions on the May 1988 JDAL, we developed criteria and reviewed two samples of designated positions. The first sample consisted of 241 randomly selected positions out of a total of 2,546 joint duty positions in five selected operational organizations (where all field grade and above positions were included on the list). Percentages for this sample have a precision of +/- 6 percent at a 95-percent level of confidence. Operational organizations included in our sample were OSD, the Joint Staff, and the Pacific, Atlantic, and Transportation Commands. We selected these five organizations because we believe they represent a cross-section of the types of operational agencies.

The second sample included 133 positions out of a total of 1,159 JDAL positions in four support agencies (where 50 percent of the field grade and all general/flag officer positions were included on the list). Percentages for this sample have a precision of +/- 8 percent at a 95-percent level of confidence. Support agencies included in our sample were the Defense Communications Agency, Defense Mapping Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, and Defense Logistics Agency. We selected these agencies because they are the four agencies defined in the Reorganization Act as "combat support agencies." Therefore, we believe these defense agencies would more likely have positions that involve officers in matters relating to the integrated employment of forces than other defense agencies.

Based on discussions with DOD personnel and interviews with incumbents of various designated joint duty positions, we developed six categories of military experience. The categories range from a position

which involves the incumbent in the joint aspects of current joint operations and/or joint exercises to a position which involves the incumbent in only the single-service aspects of technical or administrative matters. We used these categories to define the type of experience being provided by jobs on the May 1988 joint duty assignment list. We placed sampled positions in one of the six categories based on structured interviews with incumbents in these positions and reviews of position descriptions. (See chapter 3 for a description of the categories and a discussion of how we placed positions in categories.)

To determine how DOD designated critical positions, we discussed with OSD and Joint Staff officials the rationale and reasoning behind the designation of critical positions in affected organizations.

To determine whether certain positions in the military departments involved officers in matters related to the integrated employment of forces, we analyzed a judgmental sample of such positions using the same approach we used for designated positions. Additionally, to determine the type of experience being gained by officers in nondesignated positions in support agencies, we analyzed a random sample of 130 nondesignated field grade and above positions in the four support agencies from a total of 951 such positions. Percentages for this sample have a precision level of +/- 8 percent at a 95-percent level of confidence.

We performed our work between October 1988 and May 1989 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Development of the Joint Duty Assignment List

DOD first published the JDAL in April 1987. The list included all positions for ranks field grade and above in agencies that DOD believed employed or planned the employment of military forces. The list also included all general/flag officer positions and up to 50 percent of field grade positions in agencies that support operations. DOD tasked support agency managers to designate appropriate positions. Operational and support agency managers were also instructed to identify critical positions which must eventually be filled by joint specialists.

Developing the JDAL

In November 1986, DOD developed an initial definition of a joint duty assignment and began developing the JDAL. DOD decided to include all positions at or above captain/Navy lieutenant in the operational organizations. DOD asked all other agencies to nominate positions for the JDAL based on the following working definition:

"... an assignment in a multi-service or multi-national command or activity which is involved in the integrated employment of land, sea and air forces of at least two of the four armed services. Such involvement includes, but is not limited to, matters relating to national military strategy, joint doctrine or policy, strategic planning, contingency planning, and command and control of combat operations under unified command."

Based on agency responses, an initial proposed list was identified, which DOD considered as too large. It included about 11,500 positions, about 7,650 from the operational organizations and about 3,850 from the support agencies.

According to a Joint Staff official, in March 1987, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that the JDAL could contain no more than about 9,000 positions. DOD believed that a much smaller list would not generate a sufficient number of candidates for general/flag officer with a prior joint tour of duty. Unless the Secretary of Defense issued a waiver, officers were required to complete a joint duty tour before being selected for general/flag rank. On the other hand, DOD believed that a much larger list would take too many high quality officers from the services, resulting in a possible degradation of readiness.

A Joint Staff official explained that to develop the first list of about 9,000 positions, DOD directed that two actions be taken. First, the minimum rank for inclusion on the list was raised from captain/Navy lieutenant to field grade. He stated that the Joint Chiefs of Staff believed

that experience at the captain/Navy lieutenant level was not appropriate when considering a candidate for general/flag officer promotion. He further explained that DOD placed all field grade and above positions in the operational organizations on the list. Second, the support organizations were directed to designate no more than 50 percent of field grade positions as joint duty assignments using an amended version of the original working definition of a joint duty assignment. This new OSD definition specifically included support functions by stating the designated position must be "in a multi-service or multinational command or activity that is involved in the integrated employment or support of land, sea, and air forces of at least two of the three Military Departments." This reduced the number to about 8,000 positions and the April 1987 list was published. The JDAL was updated in May 1988 and contained 8,363 positions. Table 2.1 shows the breakdown by service and grade. We did not analyze the number of JDAL positions necessary for DOD to comply with any title IV provisions.

Table 2.1: May 1988 JDAL Positions by Service and Grade^a

	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Total
Major	1,045	584	1,090	159	2,878
Lieutenant colonel	1,287	731	1,254	195	3,467
Colonel	618	405	640	76	1,739
General ^b	100	73	92	14	279
Total	3,050	1,793	3,076	444	8,363

^aGrades are for all services except the Navy. Navy equivalent grades are lieutenant commander, commander, captain, and admiral, respectively.

^bTotal is of all four general/admiral grades.

Defense Agency Managers Designated Positions

Based on DOD's working definition of a joint duty assignment, support agency managers determined which of their positions would be included on the list. Officials from the four support agencies we visited generally stated that they believed the positions they designated best met the OSD definition, although agency managers took different approaches to meet the 50-percent limit on positions. For example, according to Defense Mapping Agency officials, they gave preference to positions that did not require mapping, cartography, and geodesy skills. The agency did this because the joint designation made positions in other skill areas attractive to quality officers. They said that placing quality officers in positions requiring mapping, cartography, and geodesy skills was generally not difficult. According to Defense Intelligence Agency officials, they

gave preference for a joint designation to positions that involved strategically important areas, such as the Middle East and Central America.

Officials at the Defense Communications, Defense Mapping, and Defense Intelligence Agencies stated the 50-percent limitation is causing problems, especially a morale problem. They said, in many cases, some of the officers doing similar or identical jobs are in joint positions and some are not. In contrast, Defense Logistics Agency representatives said they believed they were not experiencing a similar problem because they had tried to ensure that similar positions were treated equally. Defense Intelligence and Defense Mapping Agency officials also said that being in a nonjoint position in a defense agency hurts the careers of officers because they are not in their home service and are not obtaining joint credit. Also, an OSD official said that once an officer is assigned to a joint position, the officer cannot be reassigned to a nonjoint position within the agency without an exception from the Secretary of Defense. The official added that this provision hampers agencies' ability to manage its personnel.

Designating Critical Positions

Title IV required the Secretary of Defense to designate at least 1,000 joint duty assignment positions as critical. He was to designate them from joint duty assignments, while considering that the officers in such positions must be particularly trained in and oriented towards joint matters. Critical positions must eventually be filled with joint specialists.

In November 1986, DOD began identifying critical positions. OSD and the Joint Staff directed the operational and support agencies and activities to identify and submit critical position designations. DOD guidance stated that critical positions were positions that required an officer with joint education and prior joint duty experience. It emphasized that critical positions were not necessarily key positions (essential to the organization), but were positions where jointness was especially crucial. To ensure the number of critical positions would both meet the required 1,000 positions and be a manageable size, OSD and the Joint Chiefs of Staff instructed the agencies to designate between 11 and 15 percent of their joint designated positions as critical. According to DOD officials, deviations outside this range were allowed for fully justified cases. The May 1988 list contained 1,020 critical positions, as shown in table 2.2.

**Chapter 2
Development of the Joint Duty
Assignment List**

**Table 2.2: Critical JDAL Positions by
Service and Grade^a**

	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Total
Major	0	0	0	0	0
Lieutenant colonel	191	86	191	27	495
Colonel	185	116	176	26	503
General ^b	10	3	8	1	22
Total	386	205	375	54	1,020

^aGrades are for all services except Navy. Navy equivalent grades included are lieutenant commander, commander, captain, and admiral, respectively.

^bTotal is of all four general/admiral grades. Title IV was amended in 1987 to require a substantial number of general/flag officer joint duty billets be designated critical.

**DOD Believes Appropriate
Critical Positions Have
Been Designated**

Although they had some difficulty getting appropriate positions designated as critical on previous lists, OSD and Joint Staff officials believe that appropriate positions were designated as critical for the 1989 JDAL. According to a Joint Staff official, the problems occurred because guidance sent to organizations was not specific and misunderstandings occurred about what a critical position was supposed to be. For example, some managers related critical positions to key positions, contrary to the guidance that had been provided. Although these key positions may be essential to the organization, it may not be necessary for the incumbent to be experienced and educated in joint matters prior to filling the position. The Joint Staff official said that, in other cases, managers apparently designated positions critical because, at the time, they were filled by officers who had recently been designated joint specialists. Although this allowed the organization to be in compliance with the requirement to fill critical billets with joint specialists, it possibly overlooked the requirement to ensure that the billet was one that required an incumbent with previous joint education and experience.

According to a Joint Staff official, DOD began reviewing all JDAL critical-designated positions in 1988. The official said that agencies were provided guidance for critical designations which required them to submit documentation justifying every critical position. He stated that, in general, they believe appropriate positions have been identified and will be included on the 1989 list. (See appendix I for additional information on critical positions.)

JDAL Positions Provide a Wide Range of Experiences

DOD's May 1988 joint duty assignment list contains positions that provide a wide range of experiences, from participating in current joint operations to involvement in nonoperational matters. Nonoperational positions involve officers in matters indirectly related to the integrated employment of forces and range from developing DOD manpower and personnel policies to performing technical and administrative duties. The Secretary of Defense has discretion in determining the types of positions that should be included on the list. DOD believes that experience in nonoperational joint positions effectively accomplishes the spirit and intent of title IV for officer professional development.

Because the definition of joint matters contained in title IV (i.e., "... the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces ...") suggests to us joint operations, we reviewed positions over a range of operational to nonoperational positions. In our sample of designated positions, 60 percent of the JDAL positions in selected force employer organizations and 42 percent in selected defense agencies provide joint operational experience.

Joint Matters Defined in the Legislation

Title IV required the Secretary of Defense to define a joint duty assignment and develop a list of positions that would provide incumbents significant experience in joint matters. Under title IV, "joint matters" are defined as "matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, including matters relating to national military strategy, strategic and contingency planning, and command and control of combat operations under unified command." Neither the legislation nor the legislative history further explain the intended meaning of the phrase. The Secretary of Defense has discretion in determining which jobs in a joint organization could be included on the list, and in implementing this legislation, he has interpreted the phrase as including both operational and nonoperational joint positions.

GAO Analysis Focused on Operational Content of JDAL Positions

To determine the type of experience being provided by jobs on the May 1988 list, we first defined six categories of experience ranging from involvement in current joint operations to administrative matters involving only one service. We developed these categories based on discussions with OSD, Joint Staff, service personnel, and interviews with position incumbents in various joint organizations. We briefed OSD and Joint Staff officials on our categories. Without commenting on our specific categories, they acknowledged it was possible to differentiate between the operational and nonoperational content of positions.

Based on personal interviews with incumbents of sampled JDAL positions and reviews of position descriptions, we placed each position in one of the six categories. In making judgments about how to categorize a position, we focused on the extent to which the incumbents' duties and responsibilities exposed them to operational matters, and what the position incumbent did versus how their work products were used. For example, in one case, an officer worked as a systems analyst on a computer model that would be used in joint planning of the force structure. Although joint force structure planning would likely involve a joint operational matter (i.e., a matter relating to the integrated employment of forces), we placed the position in a nonoperational category because the officer worked primarily as a technical specialist with little involvement in joint force structure planning issues.

GAO Categories

We developed our categories to define a range of experience in military assignments. We defined our first two categories as operational. In our judgment, these provide experience in matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces. The next two categories provide experience that we characterize as nonoperational or technical/administrative and believe provides only indirect experience in joint matters. The remaining two categories provide what we consider to be single-service experience, although the incumbent works in a joint staffed organization. Table 3.1 shows our categories.

Table 3.1: Categories Used to Define Sampled Positions

Category	Type of experience
I. Joint operational	Current operations, exercises, and/or operational planning
II. Joint operational (related)	Involvement in operational matters other than current operations, exercises, and/or operational planning
III. Joint nonoperational	Nonoperational plans and policies
IV. Joint technical and administrative	Technical and administrative
V. Single service operational	Officer assigned to joint organization but works primarily with his or her own service on operational matters
VI. Single service	Officer assigned to joint organizations but works primarily with his or her own service on nonoperational matters

Category I positions provide officers with direct experience in joint operational matters, including operational and contingency planning, exercises, and actual military operations. For example, a plans officer in

the Intelligence Directorate of the Pacific Command is directly involved with exercises and operations plans. The position is in a multiservice unit responsible for preparing and reviewing intelligence policy, plans, and procedures. The position incumbent prepares the intelligence portions of command operations plans, joint exercises, and special contingency plans. In addition, the officer reviews, monitors, and coordinates Pacific Command intelligence plans and directives.

Category II positions expose officers to operational matters other than current operations, exercises, and plans. Positions within the Defense Intelligence Agency frequently fall into this category. For example, an intelligence officer in the Agency's Directorate for Current Intelligence assesses and projects potential threats to U.S. security by receiving and analyzing information on political developments and military forces in foreign countries.

Although positions in categories III and IV are joint, their duties and responsibilities provide only indirect experience in operational matters. Category III positions involve officers in matters that have little direct bearing on military operations. For example, the incumbent of a position in OSD's Force Management and Personnel Directorate is responsible for developing and implementing manpower and personnel policies and procedures throughout the services. A joint technical and administrative position (category IV) provides officers with experience which, although joint, is not operational and does not involve plans or policy development. In one such position, an officer in the Joint Staff provides various types of administrative support, including mail and document distribution.

Although we found relatively few in our review, single service-oriented positions provide officers with experience that can be operational (category V) or nonoperational (category VI), but that are primarily with their own service. For example, a Navy officer employed in the Joint Staff as a defense forces cost analyst said he analyzed and helped to develop a computer database that would provide the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other decisionmakers with data for resource assessment decisions. This database would allow decisionmakers to assess the impact of changes in budget levels on force structure and readiness. The officer said he is the database developer and analyst for the "Navy side" of the model. (See appendix II for additional examples of positions.)

Many JDAL Positions Provide Experience in Operational Matters

Based on our analysis, many positions on the JDAL provide joint operational experience. In the operational organizations reviewed, 60 percent of the positions sampled provided joint operational experience. In the support agencies reviewed, 42 percent of the positions sampled provided joint operational experience. Table 3.2 shows the results of our analysis of 241 positions for operational organizations and 133 positions for support agencies. (See appendixes III and IV for detailed results.)

Table 3.2: Sampled Operational and Nonoperational Positions in Selected Organizations

Categories in percent		
Number of sampled positions	241	133
Category	Operational organizations ^a	Support agencies ^b
I. Joint operational (operations, exercises, and plans)	37	10
II. Joint operations (other)	23	32
Total - joint operational	60	42
III. Joint nonoperational (plans & policies)	28	23
IV. Joint technical & administrative	10	33
V. Single service operational	1	0
VI. Single service nonoperational	1	2
Total - not joint operational	40	58
Total	100	100

^aOperational organizations are involved in the employment of forces or planning for such employment. We reviewed positions in OSD, the Joint Staff, and the Transportation, Atlantic, and Pacific Commands.

The confidence interval around the percentages is +/- 6 percent at a 95-percent level of confidence. This means that the value in the population is between 6 percent less and 6 percent greater than the percentage shown 95 percent of the time. For example, between 31 percent and 43 percent of the officer assignments are likely to be in category I.

^bSupport agencies refer to organizations that support the force employers. We reviewed positions in the Defense Communications, Defense Intelligence, Defense Logistics, and Defense Mapping Agencies.

The confidence interval around the percentages is +/- 8 percent at a 95 percent level of confidence. This means that the value in the population is between 8 percent less and 8 percent greater than the percentage shown 95 percent of the time. For example, between 2 percent and 18 percent of the officer assignments are likely to be in category I.

The high number of positions that do not provide joint operational experience reflects, in part, the process that was used to develop the joint duty assignment list (JDAL). The list includes all of the field grade and above positions at or above the rank of major/lieutenant commander in operational agencies, regardless of the position duties and responsibilities. Support agencies could designate as joint duty assignments all general/flag officer positions and up to 50 percent of field

grade positions. Because a joint designation would likely attract quality officers to a position, support agency managers had an incentive to designate positions up to the 50-percent maximum, regardless of a position's duties and responsibilities.

Many Nondesignated Positions Provide Experience in Operational Matters

We reviewed a statistical sample of nondesignated positions in support agencies and a judgmental sample of positions currently classified as in-service (within a military department) to determine if they provide officers with joint operational experience. Some nondesignated positions in defense agencies and many in-service positions provide experience in joint operational matters. In February 1989, DOD issued guidance that may result in some of these in-service positions being transferred to other services and added to the list.

Nondesignated Positions in Support Agencies

We interviewed a random sample of officers in nondesignated positions at field grade and above in four selected support agencies.¹ Many (36 of 130 or about 28 percent) of these positions provided joint operational experience. For example, an officer employed as a strategic systems test manager at the Defense Communications Agency is in a nondesignated position. This officer develops plans and procedures to test and evaluate strategic operations and communications systems during Joint Staff exercises and to determine these systems' responsiveness to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other decisionmakers. The officer said he manages the planning, execution, and analysis of Joint Staff-sponsored exercises during which communications systems are tested in a wartime environment. In another example, the Defense Intelligence Agency's deputy director for intelligence commands the National Military Intelligence Center with the primary mission of providing strategic warning notifications and time-sensitive critical intelligence to DOD. This officer is involved in managing one of the watch teams that staff the Intelligence Center 24 hours per day. Table 3.3 shows our analysis of 130 non-JDAL positions in support agencies. (See appendix V for detailed results.)

¹Support agencies were the Defense Communications, Defense Intelligence, Defense Logistics, and Defense Mapping Agencies.

Table 3.3: Sampled Nondesignated Positions in Selected Support Agencies

Number of sampled positions	130
Category	Percent ^a
I. Joint operational (operations, exercises, and plans)	9
II. Joint operations (other)	19
Total - joint operational	28
III. Joint nonoperational (plans & policies)	25
IV. Joint technical & administrative	40
V. Single service operational	0
VI. Single service nonoperational	7
Total - not joint operational	72
Total	100

^aThe confidence interval around the percentages is +/- 8 percent at a 95-percent level of confidence. This means that the value in the population is between 8 percent less and 8 percent greater than the percentage shown 95 percent of the time. For example, between 1 percent and 17 percent of the officer assignments are likely to be in category I.

Some Positions in the Military Departments May Be Added to the JDAL

Under recently issued DOD guidelines, some positions in the services may be added to the JDAL. However, the number of such positions appears to be limited, and the services may oppose large scale implementation of these guidelines.

In February 1989, OSD and the Joint Staff issued guidelines to the services on adding "dual-hat" and "cross-department" positions to the list. A dual-hat position is "an assignment in which the incumbent officer has responsibilities to both a Service and a joint, combined, or international organization or activity." For example, although many Army officers in Korea are authorized on the 8th Army manning documents, they spend the majority of their time performing Combined Forces Command (multinational organization) duties and responsibilities. Under the new guidelines, for a position to be on the list, the Army must determine that the incumbent spends a large amount of time in a joint, combined, or international organization and receives an official performance evaluation from an officer of the joint/combined/international activity. Also, the Army must officially assign the position to the organization.

We found dual-hat positions that provide experience in the integrated employment of forces. We interviewed incumbents of 27 dual-hat positions: 22 in the Pacific Command and associated organizations and 5 in

the Transportation Command.² The Pacific Command sample was taken from a universe of 152 positions identified by service officials as providing good experience in joint matters. In selecting individual positions, we attempted to obtain a balanced representation of pay grade, job function, and command location. At the Transportation Command, we interviewed five incumbents of dual-hat positions.

We determined that 19 of these positions provide joint operational experience (category I or II): 17 in the Pacific Command and 2 in the Transportation Command. For example, the assistant chief of staff, Intelligence Directorate, 8th Army, also serves as the chief, Plans and Operations Branch, Intelligence Directorate, U.S. Forces Korea and the chief, Plans and Operations Division, Intelligence Directorate, Combined Forces Command. His duties include preparing the intelligence portion of U.S. Forces Korea/Combined Field Command operations plans, planning and controlling the intelligence participation in command exercises, representing the 8th Army and U.S. Forces Korea at all intelligence/electronic warfare meetings, and managing an office that directs counter-intelligence at Yongsan, Korea. In the event of war, he will serve as director, Intelligence, U.S. Forces Korea and U.S. 8th Army. Table 3.4 shows the results of our interviews.

Table 3.4: Categorization of Selected Dual-Hat Positions in the Pacific and Transportation Commands

Category	Number
I. Joint operational (operations, plans, exercises)	12
II. Joint operational (other)	7
Total - joint operational	19
III. Joint nonoperational (plans & policies)	1
IV. Joint technical & administrative	1
V. Single service operational	3
VI. Single service nonoperational	3
Total - nonjoint nonoperational	8
Total	27

Officers serving in cross-departmental positions are on service manning documents, but are actually assigned to positions in other services. For example, Air Force air liaison officers are typically cross-departmental positions. The air liaison officers we interviewed were pilots who were advising Army components on the capabilities, limitations, and proper

²These officers were authorized on their respective military department manpower documents but were assigned duties and responsibilities to either the Pacific or Transportation Command Headquarters. These officers did not get joint duty credit for their duties with the joint organizations.

use of tactical air units. Air liaison officers are generally collocated with the Army units they work with. For example, the Air Force liaison officer assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division coordinates air support requests from subordinate air liaison officers at the Army brigade and battalion level, and directs air support for the Army commander. The incumbent also advises the Army commander regarding close air support during exercises and operations. Under the February 1989 guidelines, for an Air Force air liaison officer to obtain joint credit, the Air Force must be willing to transfer the position to the Army, although the Air Force officer would still fill the position. According to the Air Force, there are about 250 air liaison officers currently working with Army organizations at the level of brigade and higher.

OSD and Joint Staff officials said they will be requesting nomination of dual-hat and cross-departmental positions to be included on the updated 1990 list. However, they believe such nominations will be limited because, although the positions provide joint operational experience, the position must be assigned to the joint organization to be on the list.

Implications for an Operationally Focused JDAL

DOD officials have several concerns about an operationally focused list. An operational list would likely be smaller than the May 1988 list of 8,363 positions, which would likely reduce the opportunities for officers to satisfy the requirement to have a joint duty tour prior to selection for general/flag officer. Additionally, development of an operational list would require DOD to do a position-by-position analysis versus designating all or a percentage of all positions in joint organizations. Because many of the positions removed from an operationally focused list would likely be in combat support fields, the joint duty opportunities for officers in these fields will decrease in a greater proportion than for officers in combat arms specialties. Also, some opportunities for combat arms officers to fill joint duty positions would be reduced because these officers currently fill some positions in nonoperational support fields.

Our analysis suggests that an operationally focused list would be smaller than the May 1988 JDAL of 8,363 positions. In the operational organizations we reviewed, about 1,550 joint duty assignments from a universe of 2,546 provide officers experience in joint operational matters. In the support agencies we reviewed, we estimate that about 500 joint duty assignments from a universe of 1,159 provide officers with experience in joint operational matters. We also estimate that about 270 of 951 nondesignated positions in the support agencies surveyed provided officers with experience in joint operational matters. If the JDAL

were comprised of operational positions only from the agencies we sampled, the list would contain about 2,300 positions instead of 3,700, a reduction of about 37 percent. According to OSD and Joint Staff officials, potential additions to the list from dual-hat and cross-departmental nominations may only minimally offset the loss of positions we determined were nonoperational.

Although an operational list would be smaller, we did not analyze its impact on DOD's ability to satisfy the joint duty prerequisite for promotion to general/flag rank. Although the Secretary of Defense has some limited authority to waive the requirement, the Congress intended general/flag candidates to have completed a joint tour. This establishes a requirement for a minimum number of joint duty positions. DOD initially estimated that number to be between 8,000 and 9,000 positions.

To develop an operationally focused list, DOD would have to analyze positions individually. DOD officials said they do not have the resources to accomplish such an analysis. Additionally, they argue that because of constantly changing organizational structures, the analysis would effectively be ongoing. A final concern is that such an approach would create undesirable personnel management and morale problems because joint and nonjoint positions would exist in the same organization—the same situation that purportedly exists in the defense agencies today. We did not assess DOD's concern about resources required to do a position-by-position analysis. However, it seems reasonable that DOD could utilize existing resources in its chain of command to categorize positions using criteria similar to that used in our analysis.

Although we did not perform a comprehensive analysis on all support career fields, it is likely that joint duty opportunities for officers in some support career fields may diminish as opportunities for joint credit decrease due to a smaller, more operational list. For example, we analyzed the number of operational (GAO categories I and II) and nonoperational (GAO categories III through IV) positions in two support areas (logistics and communications). In positions requiring a logistics officer,³ 25 percent of 40 positions sampled were operational. In positions requiring a communications officer, 45 percent of 55 positions were operational. By contrast, in positions calling for an operational officer (combat occupational specialty), 74 percent of 116 positions were operational. This suggests that under a smaller operational list, more positions

³Logistics in this report excludes procurement and contract administration positions.

in logistics and communications (and perhaps other support fields) than in combat specialties would be eliminated from the JDAL.

With a smaller operationally focused list, it appears likely that some joint duty opportunities will be lost for officers with combat operations specialties.⁴ Many of the nonoperational joint duty positions that would be eliminated are occupied by officers with primary skills in combat specialties. Some of these officers occupy nonoperational positions because they have a secondary noncombat specialty. In our sample of 116 officers with combat operations specialties, 26 percent were assigned to nonoperational joint positions.

Agency Comments

DOD concurred with our report. DOD restated several of its concerns about a smaller, more operationally focused list. For example, it said a smaller list would reduce the opportunity for combat arms officers to fill joint duty positions since many presently fill joint nonoperational positions. DOD also acknowledged its uncertainty about how well it could satisfy the joint duty prerequisite for promotion to general/flag officer with a shorter list.

DOD stated that a smaller, more operationally focused list would fail to recognize the importance of support functions in joint warfighting. Finally, DOD expressed a concern that changes to the joint duty program at this point would seriously disrupt its implementation efforts.

⁴Combat operations specialties include Army and Marine Corps infantry, Navy submariners, and aviation/pilot in all services.

Analysis of Data Obtained on Incumbents of Critical Positions

Although we focused on the content of joint duty positions, we also obtained information on positions designated as critical. We interviewed incumbents of 57 critical positions during our review of the JDAL—34 out of 241 in operational agencies and 23 out of 133 in defense agencies. The results of these samples cannot be projected beyond the set of agencies studied.

In the operational agencies we reviewed, 60 percent of positions we sampled provided experience in joint operational matters. However, when we compared critical to noncritical positions in our sample, 79 percent of critical positions provided experience in the joint operational matters, compared to only 57 percent of noncritical positions.

In the operational agencies we reviewed, about 56 percent of the incumbents in critical positions stated that to at least a great extent, their position should be filled with someone who has successfully completed a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment. Only 26 percent of incumbents in noncritical positions felt the same way about their position. Also, 56 percent of the incumbents in critical positions said that to at least a great extent, their position should be filled by someone who has successfully completed an intermediate level curriculum at a joint military educational institution. Forty-two percent of the incumbents in noncritical positions felt the same way about their position. Further, 80 percent of the incumbents in critical positions compared to 50 percent of the incumbents of noncritical positions stated that to at least a great extent, their position should be filled by someone who had either completed a joint tour and/or a curriculum at a joint professional military education institution.

In the defense agencies where we reviewed designated positions, 42 percent of positions we sampled provided experience in joint operational matters. However, when we compared critical to noncritical positions in our sample, 69 percent of the critical positions provided experience in the joint operational matters, compared to only 36 percent of noncritical positions.

In the defense agencies, 52 percent of the incumbents in critical positions stated that to at least a great extent, their position should be filled with someone who has successfully completed a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment. Only 30 percent of incumbents in noncritical positions felt the same way. According to 52 percent of the incumbents in critical positions, at least to a great extent, their position should be filled

Appendix I
Analysis of Data Obtained on Incumbents of
Critical Positions

by someone who has successfully completed an intermediate level curriculum at a joint military educational institution. In contrast, 35 percent of the incumbents in noncritical positions felt the same way. Also, 70 percent of the incumbents in critical positions, compared to 49 percent of the incumbents of noncritical positions said that to at least a great extent, their position should be filled by someone who had either completed a joint tour and/or a curriculum at a joint professional military educational institution.

Although DOD has until 1994 before all joint duty assignments have to be filled by joint specialty officers, 65 percent of the critical positions in our operational agency sample and 78 percent in our defense agency sample were filled with joint specialists.

Examples of Positions Sampled by GAO

Category I. Joint Operational (Current Operations, Exercises, and/or Plans)

1. Warfare Policy Planner, Joint Staff

Incumbent develops and maintains joint and combined activity plans and policies regarding low intensity conflict; participates in developing strategic plans and exercise objectives.

2. Deputy Director, Joint Air Reconnaissance Center, Atlantic Command

Officer manages and directs a center which provides radar surveillance, flight tracking, and intercept control for reconnaissance aircraft flying near Cuba.

3. Logistics Readiness Plans Officer, Defense Logistics Agency

Incumbent coordinates theater logistical planning for combatant commands in support of operational and contingency plans; develops plans for Defense Logistics Agency participation in Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises; and prepares and coordinates evaluation of Defense Logistics Agency participation in exercises.

Category II. Joint Operational (Other Operational Matters)

1. Operations Research Analyst, Office of Secretary of Defense

Officer studies and analyzes DOD tactical air forces programs including mission objectives, weapons effectiveness, relation of land based to carrier based aircraft, and close air support and deployment factors.

2. Intelligence Staff Officer, Defense Intelligence Agency

Manages intelligence input on the Soviet Union's strategic forces and participates in planning and formulating U.S. arms control treaties.

3. Command, Control and Communications (C³) Staff Officer, Defense Communications Agency

Incumbent is responsible for developing joint tactical C³ mission architectures. Officer's duties include reviewing and evaluating C³ aspects of operations plans and contingency plans.

**Category III. Joint
Nonoperational
(Nonoperational Plans and
Policies)**

**1. Director, Officer & Enlisted Personnel Management, Office of
Secretary of Defense**

Incumbent ensures that personnel laws, policies, and practices are analyzed and evaluated, and develops policy recommendations for effective DOD officer and enlisted manpower management.

**2. Procurement Management Staff Officer, Defense Logistics
Agency**

Officer reviews proposed procurement legislation and policies, determines effect on the Defense Logistics Agency's operations, and recommends the Agency's position on these issues.

**3. Assistant Deputy Director, Programs, Production, and Operations,
Defense Mapping Agency**

Officer formulates plans, policies and procedures for managing and coordinating agency production. Officer establishes milestones and guidelines for agency production.

**Category IV. Joint
Technical and
Administrative**

**1. Veterans & Service Organization Liaison Officer, Office of the
Secretary of Defense**

Incumbent represents DOD before various veterans, service, and youth groups; supervises tours of the Pentagon; schedules Blue Angels for flying exhibitions; and processes requests for military bands.

2. Deputy Chief, Services Division, Joint Staff

Incumbent directs and manages the daily operation of branches that provide technical and administrative support to the Joint Staff in such areas as graphic arts, photographic and printing support, mail and document distribution, facilities maintenance, and travel.

3. Program Analyst, Defense Intelligence Agency

Performs reviews of agency internal controls and other management analyses.

Category V. Single Service Operational (Involves the Officer in the Operational Matters of His/Her Service)

Only two examples found in GAO sample.

Category VI: Single Service Nonoperational (Involves the Officer in the Nonoperational, and Technical and Administrative Matters of His or Her Service)

1. Head, Navy Branch, Pacific Command

Provides personnel support for Navy and Marine Corps staff.

2. Deputy Director, Air Force Programs, Defense Intelligence Agency

Air Force officer works primarily budget matters for Air Force programs.

3. Defense Contract Administration Services, Plant Representative Office Command, Commander, Defense Logistics Agency

Manages an organization which administers contracts for an Air Force depot maintenance program for the KC-135 aircraft.

Categorization of Sampled JDAL Positions in Each Operational Organization Reviewed

	JCS ^a	OSD ^a	LANTCOM ^a	PACOM ^a	TRANSCOM ^a	Total ^a
I. Joint operational (exercises, plans, operations)	34	3	20	28	3	88
II. Joint operational (other)	22	10	1	22	3	58
III. Joint nonoperational (plans & policies)	24	25	3	14	0	66
IV. Joint technical & administrative	8	6	2	5	3	24
V. Single service operational	0	0	0	2	0	2
VI. Single service nonoperational	1	0	0	2	0	3
Total	89	44	26	73	9	241

Note: The results cannot be projected to the individual agencies sampled

^aAgencies sampled are the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD), Atlantic Command (LANTCOM), Pacific Command (PACOM), and Transportation Command (TRANSCOM)

Categorization of Sampled JDAL Positions in Each Support Agency Reviewed

	DCA ^a	DIA ^a	DLA ^a	DMA ^a	Total
I. Joint operational (exercises, plans, operations)	3	8	2	0	13
II. Joint operational (other)	7	32	1	3	43
III. Joint nonoperational (plans & policies)	7	3	21	0	31
IV. Joint technical & administrative	10	10	21	2	43
V. Single service operational	0	0	0	0	0
VI. Single service nonoperational	0	0	2	1	3
Total	27	53	47	6	133

Note: The results cannot be projected to the individual agencies sampled.

^aAgencies selected are the Defense Communications Agency (DCA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and Defense Mapping Agency (DMA).

Categorization of Sampled Non-JDAL Positions in Each Support Agency Reviewed

	DCA ^a	DIA ^a	DLA ^a	DMA ^a	Total
I. Joint operational (exercises, plans, operations)	6	4	0	2	12
II. Joint operational (other)	6	17	0	2	25
III. Joint nonoperational (plans & policies)	12	8	11	1	32
IV. Joint technical & administrative	16	10	18	8	52
V. Single service operational	0	0	0	0	0
VI. Single service nonoperational	1	2	4	2	9
Total	41	41	33	15	130

Note: The results cannot be projected to the individual agencies sampled

^aAgencies sampled are the Defense Communications Agency (DCA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and Defense Mapping Agency (DMA). Positions included are restricted to non-JDAL positions at the rank of major/lieutenant commander and above because under current DOD rules these are the only ranks eligible for inclusion on the list.

Comments From the Department of Defense



FORCE MANAGEMENT
AND PERSONNEL

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON D.C. 20301-4000

NOV 29 1989

Mr. Frank C. Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General
National Security and
International Affairs Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report entitled "MILITARY PERSONNEL: Designation of Joint Duty Assignments," dated October 20, 1989 (GAO Code 391098/OSD Case 8152). The Department concurs with the draft report.

The DoD appreciates the GAO acknowledgment that many positions on the Joint Duty Assignment List provide joint operational experience. It is satisfying to note that, using the CAO joint categories, 98 percent of the Joint Duty Assignment positions that were reviewed did meet the DoD definition of joint duty assignment. Since only 2 percent of the sampled positions were placed in the two non-joint GAO categories, the extensive effort to comply with the provisions of title IV by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the Services is validated. The Department would, however, like to provide a few comments for clarification.

The draft report correctly reflects the Department's strong concern should a smaller, more operationally focused list be required. Such an emphasis would fail to recognize the importance of support functions in joint warfighting and would wrongly imply that joint experience and knowledge is not important for support officers. Also, such a list would reduce the opportunity for combat arms officers to fill joint duty positions since many presently fill non-operational positions. Also, as acknowledged by the GAO, it is uncertain how well the DoD could satisfy the joint duty prerequisite for promotion to general/flag rank with a shorter list. Finally, any major change to the joint officer management program would seriously disrupt implementation efforts made thus far and prolong assessment of the full implications of title IV by several more years.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the joint duty draft report. (A few technical corrections were provided separately to your staff.) The cooperation and coordination by the GAO staff in preparing this report has been noteworthy.

Sincerely,



Christopher Jehn

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Related GAO Products

Military Personnel: Implementation Status of Joint Officer Personnel Policies (GAO/NSIAD-88-113, Apr. 7, 1989).

Military Personnel: Impact of Joint Duty Tours on Officer Career Paths (GAO/NSIAD-88-184BR, June 6, 1988).

Military Personnel: Proposals to Modify the Management of Officers Assigned to Joint Duty (GAO/NSIAD-88-78BR, Apr. 19, 1988).

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